
 (<https://www.facebook.com/ADEC.thanatology/>)  (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/390392/>)



[Donate Now! \(https://adec.site-ym.com/donations/\)](https://adec.site-ym.com/donations/)



MENU

Code of Ethics

[About ADEC \(/page/Discover_ADEC\)](#) » [Code of Ethics](#)

Code of Ethics

April 2004

Introduction

Preface

Basic Tenets

Ethical Standards

I. General Conduct

II. Competence

III. Responsibilities to Those Served

IV. Responsibility to Others

V. Responsibility to Employers

VII. Responsibility to Society

VIII. Confidentiality and Privacy

Death Educators and Trainers

DE-I. Responsibility to Others

DE-II. Standards of Professional Competence

Grief Counselors/Therapists

GC-I. Responsibility to Those Served

GC-III. Responsibility to Others

Researchers in Thanatology (2)

RT- I. Responsibility to Institutions

RT-II. Responsibility to Research Participants

RT-III. Responsibility in Reporting and Publishing Data

Introduction (1)

Membership in ADEC commits members and student affiliates to comply with the standards of the ADEC Code of Ethics. A lack of awareness or a misunderstanding of an Ethical Standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

The Preface and Basic Tenets are explicative and provide aspirational goals to guide thanatologists toward the highest ideals. Although the Preface and Basic Tenets are not themselves enforceable rules they should be considered by thanatologists in arriving at an ethical course of action. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly, in order to apply to thanatologists in varied roles, although the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the context. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by an Ethical Standard does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical. The Ethics Code applies across a variety of contexts, whether in person or by postal service, telephone, internet, and/or other electronic transmissions.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, thanatologists must consider this Code of Ethics in addition to the applicable laws and professional board regulations that they are subject to. If this Code of Ethics establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law or other codes, thanatologists must meet the higher ethical standard. If thanatologists' ethical responsibilities conflict with law, regulations, practice standards, or other governing legal authority, thanatologists make known their commitment to this Code of Ethics and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner.

Preface

The Association for Death Education and Counseling (herein referred to as the Association), founded in 1976, is an international, professional organization dedicated to promoting excellence in death education, care of the dying, and bereavement counseling and support. Based on quality research and theory, the Association provides information, support, and resources to its multicultural, multidisciplinary membership, and, through it, to the public.

The Association envisions a world in which dying, death, and bereavement are recognized as fundamental and significant aspects of the human experience. Therefore, the Association, ever committed to being on the forefront of thanatology, provides a home for professionals from diverse backgrounds to advance the body of knowledge and to promote practical applications of research and theory.

Recognizing the impact that death education and/or grief counseling can have upon the lives and well-being of people, the following is the Code of Ethics of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, adopted by the membership of the Association, and subscribed to by all who hold membership in the Association.

Basic Tenets

1. Death education and grief counseling are based upon a thorough knowledge of valid death-related data, methodology, and theory rather than stereotypes or untested hypotheses. Thus, the practice of death education and/or grief counseling requires knowledge of current thanatological literature.
2. The member strives to understand his or her death-related feelings and experiences and the ways in which these may impact his or her thinking and work in the field.
3. The member takes care to know the student or client. Good education and counseling are based upon an understanding of, and a respect for, the student's or client's cultural background,

developmental status, perceptions, and other individual differences and needs.

4. The member neither exploits nor deceives others, but strives to improve the health and well-being of the individual and society. Fees, if charged, conform to an available schedule, consistent with comparable services. Research conforms to standards for human participation (as the Commission on Rights of Human Subjects has currently established).
5. The member serves in an advocacy role to assist the individual or society to cope with death-related issues. The member intervenes to prevent exploitation of the student or client and is obligated: (a) to be available to the student or client; and (b) to educate or counsel regarding rights, responsibilities and options with their possible consequences.
6. The member strives to present various views of a death-related question, indicating the member's own values if appropriate, and respecting the student's or client's choice among alternatives.
7. Recognizing that conflicts over the needs of the individual, family, institution, community, or society might arise, the member includes in his/her ongoing relationship, when appropriate, discussion of confidentiality and primary responsibility to the individual, to the family, to the institution, to the community, or to society.
8. The member recognizes his/her own limitations in meeting individual needs, and has available adequate consultation and referral resources. The member assesses the efficacy of his/her referral system by obtaining feedback from the referee, the referral resource, and knowledgeable consultants.
9. The member works to promote greater understanding among lay persons and professionals of dying and death so that each member of society can achieve a more satisfying life and personal acceptance of death.

Ethical Standards

I. General Conduct

1. The Association is committed to defining and maintaining high standards of professional service and conduct. Members are responsible for keeping the Association informed about developments of new knowledge and improvements in skill development
2. Members continually strive to improve themselves, their professions, and the Association through diligent efforts to improve professional practices, services, teaching, research, and the preparation of professionals.
3. Ethical behavior among members and their associates, both members and nonmembers, is expected at all times. When a member becomes aware of another person's violation of ethical standards, the member attempts to rectify the situation. If the situation continues without a satisfactory ethical resolution, the member pursues the issue through appropriate channels.
4. Members provide their professional services to anyone regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or choice of lifestyle. When the member cannot render service, the member makes an appropriate referral.
5. Members do not use their professional relationships to further their personal, political, religious, or business interests.
6. Sexual relationships with clients, students, and/or their significant others is unethical
7. Members refrain from multiple relationships if (1) such relationships could reasonably be expected to impair the objectivity, competence, or effectiveness of the member in performing his/her responsibilities; or if (2) such relationships otherwise risk exploitation or harm to the person(s) with whom the professional relationship exists or formerly existed.
8. Members avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with professional discretion and impartial judgment. If a real or potential conflict of interest arises, members take reasonable steps to

resolve the issue in a manner that reflects the best interests of the person(s) served.

9. Members neither offer, seek, nor accept payment of any kind for referrals.

II. Competence

1. Members continually strive to attain higher levels of competence. Each member is obliged to pursue continuing education and professional growth in all possible and appropriate ways, including participating in the affairs and activities of the Association and pursuing learning activities that lead to professional certification and licensure when available.
2. When called upon to deliver professional services, members accept only those positions and assignments for which they are professionally qualified.
3. Members are aware of the limits and boundaries of their professional competence and in no way represent themselves as having qualifications beyond those which they possess. Each member is responsible for correcting any misrepresentation other persons may make regarding that member's professional qualifications.
4. Members provide only those services and utilize only those techniques for which their training and experience qualifies them.
5. Members do not engage in professional activities when it is likely that personal problems or impairment may prevent them from performing such activities in a competent manner. In such situations, members seek appropriate professional consultation and assistance toward resolution of the situation. If the member is unable or unwilling to remedy personal conditions that may jeopardize the welfare of the member's clients, it is ethical for another member or other professional person to intercede and assist the member in taking remedial action.

III. Responsibilities to Those Served

1. The primary obligations of members are to respect the integrity of and to promote the welfare of clients and students.
2. When members believe that a client's or student's condition indicates that there is a foreseeable, serious, and imminent danger to the client, to the student, or to others, members take immediate, reasonable, and prudent action and/or inform appropriate authorities in accordance with applicable legal mandates. Consultation with other knowledgeable professionals is highly encouraged.
3. Members are free to consult with other professionals about clients and/or students provided that the consultation does not place the consultant in a position of conflict of interest and providing that all concerns of privacy, informed consent, and confidentiality are met appropriately.
4. In providing professional services to clients or students, members neither violate nor diminish their legal and civil rights.
5. Members who offer services, products or information via electronic transmission inform their clients and students of the risks to privacy and the limits of confidentiality.
6. Members take reasonable precautions to protect the confidentiality of clients/students in the event of the member's termination of practice, incapacitation or death. (1) Members insure confidentiality of client/student records; (2) Members either transfer client/student records to another professional, or assure secure storage of the records; (3) Clients/students or their legal guardians are informed about the termination of practice and about the transfer/storage of records.

IV. Responsibility to Others

1. Ethical, respectful and considerate behavior is expected of members at all times among and between professional associates, whether they are members or nonmembers.
2. Members respect the confidences colleagues share with them during the course of their professional relationships and transactions unless confidences transgress legal and ethical mandates to disclose.
3. Members who have responsibility for employing and/or evaluating the performance and achievements of others fulfill those responsibilities in a timely, fair, considerate, and equitable manner on the basis of clearly enunciated criteria. Members share their evaluation of a person with the person evaluated.
4. Members maintain familiarity with the network of professional and self-help systems in the community and assist clients to avail themselves of those resources as appropriate.
5. Members know and take into account the traditions and practices of other professional groups with whom they work and cooperate fully with those groups.

V. Responsibility to Employers

1. Members clarify and establish interpersonal relations and working agreements with supervisors and subordinates especially in matters of professional relationships, confidentiality, distinctions between public and private material, maintenance and use of recorded information, and work load accountability.
2. Members inform employers of conditions that may limit their effectiveness.
3. Members submit regularly to professional review and evaluation.
4. Members accept only those assignments that are within their competency.
5. Members are responsible for on-going continuing education and development of their expertise and the expertise of their subordinates. Continuing Education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments in the field.
6. Members work to improve the employer's policies, procedures, and effectiveness of services.
7. Members use employer resources only for purposes for which they were intended.
8. Members neither engage in nor condone illegal or discriminatory practices.
9. When employer demands require members to violate ethical principles, members clarify the nature of the conflict between the demands and the principles, inform all parties of members' ethical responsibilities, and take appropriate action consistent with prevailing ethical standards.

VII. Responsibility to Society

1. Members work to prevent and to eliminate discrimination against any person or group on the basis of age, color, race, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, or mental or physical disability.
2. Members act to ensure that all persons whom they serve have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require.
3. Members clarify whether they speak as individuals or as representatives of an organization.
4. Members provide their appropriate professional services in public emergencies.
5. Members interpret and share with the public their professional expertise regarding issues affecting the welfare of the society.

VIII. Confidentiality and Privacy

1. Members regard as confidential all information arising in the course of the professional relationship. Consideration for the client welfare is an abiding concern of members.
2. Members inform clients about the limits of confidentiality in a given situation.

3. Members obtain informed client consent prior to recording or allowing third party observation of their activities. Members inform clients about the purpose of recording/observing, who will have access to the recording and under what conditions, and the disposition of the recording. Client consent for one purpose is not valid for another or different purpose.
4. Members shall disclose confidential information when members believe there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, and that the danger can be alleviated or avoided by disclosing the information. In such circumstances, members are encouraged to consult with other knowledgeable professionals.
5. When members disclose confidential information without client consent, they do so only with appropriate others and only for compelling reasons.
6. Members safeguard written and recorded information about clients and are alert to potential threats to confidentiality in duplications processes, in use of computer equipment, and in electronic mail and facsimile transmission.
7. In those rare instances when members may disclose information, they disclose only that which is relevant within the context of the incident.
8. Members adequately disguise clinical and other material they use in teaching, writing, and public speaking in order to preserve client anonymity; an alternative is to obtain adequate prior client consent.
9. Members who have professional relationships with minor children assure them proper confidentiality. Members exercise careful judgment and respect applicable laws when discussing those children with their parents or guardians.
10. Client information received in confidence by one agent or agency is not forwarded to another without the client's written consent.
11. Members take into account an individual's capacity to give consent.

Death Educators and Trainers

This section addresses those thanatologists who, on either a full-time or part-time or an occasional basis, function as a death educator or provide death education or training in any way to others.

DE-I. Responsibility to Others

1. Members in charge of programs establish learning experiences that integrate academic study and supervised practice. Such programs develop student skill, knowledge, and self-understanding.
2. Members orient students to program or learning expectations, basic skills development, and, when appropriate, to employment prospects prior to admission.
3. When a program or learning experience has a focus upon self-disclosure, self-understanding or growth, members ensure that potential students are made aware of this fact before they enter the program or begin the experience.
4. Members who employ exercises and simulations which draw upon participant thoughts, feelings, and memories must ensure that appropriate professional assistance is available to participants during and following those learning experiences.
5. When a student is expected to disclose relatively intimate or personal information about themselves as part of their learning experience, educators and supervisors shall not evaluate the student based upon such self-disclosure. The degree of self-disclosure will be respected without coercion or punitive measures.
6. When a program or learning experience has a focus upon self-disclosure, self-understanding or growth, members ensure the confidentiality and privacy of information shared in this setting.
7. Members make students aware of professional ethical responsibilities and standards.

8. When members function as educators, they maintain high standards of scholarship and objectivity. Members present information fully and accurately, and they provide appropriate recognition of alternative viewpoints.

DE-II. Standards of Professional Competence

1. Members assuming educative functions do so within their professional competence.
2. Members teach only in areas in which they have received professional preparation.
3. Members engage in continuous study and professional development in order to insure that they provide instruction based on the most current information available in the profession.
4. Members accurately cite or credit those authors and researchers whose work the member is presenting.

Grief Counselors/Therapists

This section refers to those thanatologists who, either on a full time or part-time or an occasional basis, function as grief counselors/therapists providing thanatology-related clinical services to others..

GC-I. Responsibility to Those Served

1. When members receive a referral, they actively seek all available, pertinent information from the client, legal guardian, or referral source, with appropriate written consent.
2. When a member is contacted by an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague, the member carefully considers the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. Members should (1) discuss with potential clients the nature of the client's current relationship with the other service provider and the possible risks and benefits of entering into a new professional relationship; (2) seek consent for exchange of information when it would be beneficial to the client. All resources utilized by the client should be documented appropriately.
3. Before members enter into professional relationships with potential clients, members inform clients/legal guardians about their expertise, techniques and other practices that may be used and that may affect the client's well being. Members clarify client/legal guardian goals and the purpose and expectations of the services they provide.
4. Clients/legal guardians are informed verbally and in writing at the time of the first interview about the limits of confidentiality as stipulated by law, regulation, or organizational process.
5. Prior to initiation of services, members notify clients/legal guardians of all financial responsibilities assumed by client/guardian or counselor. Fees for services, and any changes, must be identified and agreed to prior to services rendered. As a portion of their professional activities, members are encouraged to provide pro-bono or reduced fees to clients who experience financial constraints/difficulties.
6. F. Members make appointments with relatives or collateral of clients only when clients have given their permission, unless an emergent situation requires another course of action. In this case, members consider legal and ethical implications and seek consultation before proceeding.
7. When members agree to provide services to clients at the requests of third parties, the nature of each of the relationships of the involved parties is clarified, accepted by all, and documented as such. Any limitations to confidentiality will be noted as well.
8. Members keep records and other information related to clients confidential for at least the number of years determined by laws in the member's state, province or country of practice.
9. Members should seek professional consultation whenever such consultation is in the best interests of those served.

10. If members determine that they are unable, or no longer capable of providing a particular service, they carefully prepare the client and assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuing care when necessary. The client's well being is of primary concern; therefore, every attempt is made to ensure that the client does not feel abandoned and that possible adverse effects are minimized. All efforts to this end should be documented.

GC-III. Responsibility to Others

1. Grief counselors/therapists do not solicit the clients of others.
2. Grief counselors/therapists fully cooperate with professionals who treat former clients of that provider.
3. Grief counselors/therapists are encouraged to offer their expertise in the geographical community in which they live and to take part in collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork when working in a hospital or school environment.

Researchers in Thanatology (2)

This section refers to those thanatologists who, either on a full time, part-time or an occasional basis, function as researchers in thanatology-related subject areas.

RT- I. Responsibility to Institutions

1. A. When institutional approval is required, members provide accurate information about their research proposals and obtain approval prior to conducting the research.
2. B. Members conduct research in accordance with approved research protocol.

RT-II. Responsibility to Research Participants

1. When obtaining informed consent, members inform participants about the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures; and about their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research study without penalty.
2. When members conduct research with clients/patients, students, or subordinates as participants, members take steps to protect the prospective participants from adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation.
3. When research participation is a course requirement or an opportunity for extra credit, the prospective participant is given the choice of equitable alternative activities.
4. Members may dispense with informed consent only (1) where research would not reasonably be assumed to create distress or harm and involves (a) the study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings; (b) the use of anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and confidentiality is protected; or (c) the study of factors related to job or organization effectiveness conducted in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants' employability, and confidentiality is protected or (2) where otherwise permitted by law or federal or institutional regulations.
5. Members provide a prompt opportunity for participants to obtain appropriate information about the nature, results, and conclusions of the research, and they take reasonable steps to correct any misconceptions that participants may have of which the members are aware. If scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding this information, members take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of harm.

6. When members become aware that research procedures have harmed a participant, they take reasonable steps to minimize the harm.

RT-III. Responsibility in Reporting and Publishing Data

1. Members do not fabricate data.
2. If members discover significant errors in their published data, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means.
3. Members do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.
4. Members take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed

(1) Principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. Mere possession of an institutional position, such as department chair, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publications are acknowledged appropriately, such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.

(2) Except under exceptional circumstances, a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's research. Faculty advisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate.

5. Members who review material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal review respect the confidentiality of and the proprietary rights in such information of those who submitted it.
 1. Portions of this Code of Ethics are based on the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (American Psychologist, 2002, 57, 1060-1073), which is the copyrighted property of the American Psychological Association. While the American Psychological Association has given permission to ADEC to utilize the APA Code of Ethics, APA has in no way advised, assisted, or encouraged ADEC to utilize the APA Code of Ethics. APA is in no way responsible for ADEC's decision to utilize the APA Code of Ethics, or for any actions or other consequences resulting from such use by ADEC.
 2. Ibid.

UPDATED: JULY 28, 2010



Association for Death Educ...
8,670 likes

I love Thanatology Association

Like Page

Learn more



Association for Death Education and Counseling

400 S. 4th Street, Ste. 754E

Minneapolis, MN 55415 USA

Phone: 612-337-1808

adec@adec.org (mailto:adec@adec.org)

Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

[Join Membership \(/page/Join_ADEC\)](#) [Earn Certification \(/page/Earn_Certification\)](#)

Membership Software Powered by YourMembership (<http://www.yourmembership.com/>) :: [Legal \(/ams/legal-privacy.htm\)](#)